

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 957

By Staples

A RESOLUTION to honor the University of Tennessee Volunteers men's basketball team as 2017-2018 Southeastern Conference Champions.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are pleased to recognize a team of remarkable young men who defied expectations and silenced their critics to attain the very pinnacle of collegiate basketball; and

WHEREAS, picked by the so-called experts to finish 13<sup>th</sup>, or next to last place, in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) for 2017-2018, the members of the Tennessee Volunteers men's basketball team shrugged off this negative prediction and prepared themselves to win, and win big, under the assured guidance of Coach Rick Barnes; and

WHEREAS, during the pre-conference segment of their magical season, the Volunteers posted wins against Power Five conference opponents No. 11 Purdue, North Carolina State, Georgia Tech, and Wake Forest and National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Tournament team Lipscomb to enter the SEC fray at 9-3; and

WHEREAS, after losing their first two games in conference play, Tennessee rebounded mightily to defeat then No. 17 Kentucky by ten points; and

WHEREAS, the Volunteers bested the Bluegrass Wildcats again on February 6, 2018, defeated No. 24 Florida on February 21, and recorded thirteen SEC victories overall to earn a share of the SEC regular season title; and

WHEREAS, instead of placing 13<sup>th</sup> in the SEC, the Volunteers proved the naysayers wrong by ranking 13<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the *USA Today* Coaches Poll, and 12<sup>th</sup> in the Associated Press Poll, to finish the regular season as SEC Co-Champions and the highest nationally ranked team in the conference; and

WHEREAS, in the SEC Tournament, Tennessee beat Mississippi State in the quarterfinals and blasted Arkansas in the semifinals but lost a close game in the finals; and

WHEREAS, seeded third in the South Region of the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship, the Volunteers destroyed Wright State by 26 points in the first round before losing by a single point in the second round; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Volunteer's exceptional record and SEC Championship are directly attributable to the stellar play of Grant Williams, leading scorer, second leading rebounder, and SEC Player of the Year; Admiral Schofield, second leading scorer, leading rebounder, and Second Team All-SEC honoree; and Lamonté Turner, SEC Co-Sixth Man of the Year, who came off the bench as the team's third leading scorer and third assist leader; and

WHEREAS, each of the remaining Tennessee players contributed significantly to the team's championship season, including Kyle Alexander, assist leader Jordan Bone, Jordan Bowden, Lucas Campbell, James Daniel III, Chris Darrington, Jacob Fleischman, John Fulkerson, Jalen Johnson, Zach Kent, Yves Pons, Derrick Walker, and Brad Woodson; and

WHEREAS, the legendary Rick Barnes claimed his 1,000th victory as a coach this season; his leadership, acumen, and instruction were instrumental to the Volunteers' overall success, and he was deservedly named SEC Coach of the Year; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Volunteers astonished the basketball world this season, and they should be commended as they hoist their SEC Championship banner; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the University of Tennessee Volunteers men's basketball team as 2017-2018 Southeastern Conference Champions, commend their excellent record and superb play, and extend to these fine young men our best wishes for continued success on the hardwood next season.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.